/26 cont'd/

231 The greatest number of domestic animals owned by a single Miao family never exceeds a few heads if it owns any at all. This is due to several reasons: (1) The Miao are a propertyless people. 231 511 They are generally very poor and do not have enough capital to buy cattle. (2) Since their life is uncertain, without their staying settled for a long period, animal husbandry is not likely to flourish. It is not easy for them to herd a large number of animals while they themselves move from place to place. (3) Cattle are always helpful for ploughing fields, but not every Miao family owns level fields which can be tilled by animal power; consequently raising cattle is not popular among them.

233 In raising cattle, the Miao have adopted a method of letting them graze on the uncultivated land. They simply let the cattle roam in the mountains, neither fastened with rope nor guarded by herders. Except that each animal bears the brand of its owner, the cattle move completely at will. These cattle are very wild and are hard to control. Once during a wedding ceremony, I saw the host send some men with guns out into the mountains to shoot his own cattle for meat to feast his guests. Their horses are also set free without bits or bridles. /27/ Not until they are needed for riding does the owner begin to search for them in the uncultivated 556 areas. The rearing of horses, however, is limited to only a few relatively wealthy families; the ordinary family does not raise horses. The dog is the most popular animal and can be found in almost every family, because it is indispensable in hunting. In addition, pigs and chickens are also raised. Owing to the scarcity of wet rice fields, however, geese and ducks are very rare.

5. Fishing

226 Though the Miao usually live high in the mountains, it is not unusual for them to go down to the streams to fish. Their fishing gear is exactly the same as that of the Li. They have fishing nets, 227 tun, sår co, lung, tun kū, and fishing lines. (For a description of the fishing gear and its use, consult my work, Report on an Investigation of the Li of Hainan Island. There is no need to discuss them

/69 cont./

245 Among the pine trees produced in the Miao area, there is a red pine which has firm and glossy wood that does not rot when put in the earth for a long time. A good one has the quality of ox horn, is bright red, good for making implements, good-looking and durable. Also grey pine (Illus. 35) is produced, suitable for beams. Other products like mulberry, hemp 248 (Illus. 37), and cotton also are produced in quantity, and are important economic plants.

226 Fishing and animal husbandry. — The Miao like to eat [262] sour fish, so they have a number of ways of raising and catching [231] fish. To raise fish, pools in ravines are made into ponds, and [439] fry are bought from the Chinese to raise, particularly of huan and lien /a kind of bream/. Also, in low-lying rice fields they place a bamboo wattle fence to stop up the place where the field water goes out (Illus. 38), to keep the fish from flowing out. A great many common fish are raised in these fields. To catch fish they use nets, hooks, and poison. Fishing nets are cast anywhere at will in streams and rivers during the day. At night nets are put down in fast-flowing water along the embankments, on sand bars, at springs, and in shallow ponds. Also, they mix eggs with cooked rice and fry it in vegetable oil, and throw the rice in such places as still shallow water on a sand bar or in shallow ponds. Fish are said to be attracted by the smell of the food and come to gather at these places. Markers are set out in the daytime, and at night they come to these spots to cast their nets. The amount of the catch from these places is larger than elsewhere. They use a small bamboo [227] pole for a fishing rod, and a line twisted from horsetail hair. [171] The hook and the buoy are the same as those used by the Chi- [825] nese, and they also use such bugs as earthworms, centipedes, and spiders for bait. In the winter season the fish tend to remain [227] at the bottom of the water, and therefore they attach tiny pieces of lead to the line to make the hook sink down below. In the spring season when the weather gets warmer, fish become more active and swim to the surface; they therefore attach a piece of wood or twig halfway down the line to prevent the hook

/69 cont./

226 from sinking, making it easier for the fish to bite. To catch
[227] fish with poison, they isolate a section of the river by erecting dams up and down stream, then cast the poison in the water to render the fish unconscious, when they are picked up. The
[278] poisons used include tea paste, lime, potato seeds, willow leaves, and smartweed /t'u liao/. Tea paste, lime, and potato seeds have to be ground into fine powder before they are scattered in the water; the willow leaves and the smartweed are hashed into pulp with a hatchet, put into a bamboo sieve, and dipped into water. The pulp is rubbed against the bamboo with the hand to form a thick liquid, which is thrown into the water near a cleft or a cave in the cliff. When the fish smell the poison they become unconscious and float on the surface, and can be caught easily. Still another method is fishing in an illuminated pool. In such places as a shallow pool or a shallow place over a sand bar, they pick a suitable spot where they put a big rock and dig a deep pool called t'ang k'ou /"pool mouth"/. It is about a kung chih and a half in circumference and encircled with a screen of bamboo splints /Illus. 37-38 on pp. 70-71/ /72/, but with an opening left. Inside are laid slabs of stone, in which the fish love to seek shelter. When night comes the fisherman arrives with a torch. The fish are frightened by the light and struggle to escape, hitting the bamboo screen. Not a single fish is able to escape.

231 The Miao rear cattle, horses, pigs, sheep, cats, dogs,
[492] chickens, and ducks. Cattle and pigs are the most important.
[262] Not all the cattle are for field work; some are slaughtered and
[241] sold for food. Pigs are used for food, and their manure for fertilizer. Horses, sheep, and ducks are comparatively fewer in number. Cats, dogs, and chickens are found in every household.

[245] Mulberry trees are grown in the Miao area. The Miao women also know how to raise silkworms. Formerly they did not know how to hatch the eggs. Every spring when the Chinese
[439] started hatching silkworms, groups of them would carry baskets of native products to exchange for silkworms. They reared the

[text continues on P. 103]

3: Moninger E-5 (no date) 1921 AE5 Miao AE5

the porcupine, whose flesh is eaten, and whose shiny black and white quills, often a foot long, have various uses. The flying squirrel is a rarer victim, as only the poisoned dart shot from the crossbow by a skilled hunter is quick enough to strike it. Jungle fowl of all sorts are used for food.

The fishing is usually done on a large scale. If a youngster goes a-fishing, his outfit is a piece of bamboo and a piece of hemp string with a noose on the end, where he nooses his catch. But when the rivers are low a whole village or perhaps several villages will join in a common fishing expedition. Some of the men dam the river, others go to the forest and come back laden with the bark of a certain tree and a certain vine. These barks are pounded in mortars until well macerated, mixed, and pounds and pounds of the "medicine" are poured into the river above the dam. The mixture kills or stupifies the fish, which rise to the top of the water and are easily secured. The catch often amounts to a thousand-odd pounds of fish, not to mention crabs and eels and other creatures. The fish are cleaned immediately and the people eat them without fear although they say that a chicken or duck that eats the entrails will sometimes die from the poison. The fish not wanted for immediate consumption are salted down with a variety of pooped rice and kept for future use. This method may injure the small fish in the river—undoubtedly it does injure them in the immediate vicinity of the catching—but does not have any serious effect on the total supply, apparently.

The costume worn by the men differs very little from that worn by an ordinary Chinese labourer except in the way the coat fastens, as it laps a little to the left and fastens slantingly down the front. The costume worn by the women however, is the distinguishing feature of the people, and is a very attractive outfit in its blue and red with touches of other colours on the head kerchief. For a grown woman, the costume consists of a kerchief, a coat and a short skirt, both dark blue, and dark blue puttees. A narrow red silk girdle, about an inch wide, woven by the women themselves and ending in long fringe, is worn around the hips. The same style of tie, only about a quarter of an inch wide, fastens each puttee just below the knee. The material for the clothing is bought from the traders, and is a coarse, heavy, unbleached cotton cloth. The women dye the goods with indigo and set the colour with pigs blood. The coat is made quite like a Chinese woman's coat, but reaching to the knees and not lapping so far over to the side. A piece of turkey red cotton is embroidered and put on as a narrow collar band; the bottoms of the rather loose sleeves are edged the same

/352 cont./

226 ashes into the mass, and pour it all into the inlet of the pools.
[278] It takes only a few minutes for the stupefied fish to come to the surface. In a short time, the stream is "cleared" of fish, but not only at this spot, for the poison flowing downstream kills for miles farther on primarily the young fish, for which even the diluted poison is still fatal, though it is no longer dangerous for the larger fish.

[227] Fishing is also done with hooks without barbs and with small hand-nets (see the chapter, "Handicrafts," Fig. 347), as well as with simple weirs (Fig. 266). The latter are 60
[285] centimeters high and /Fig. 266 appears here/ plaited loosely out of bamboo strips five millimeters wide, so that only larger fish and crabs are caught. The weirs are put in the brooks. This kind of fishing, in contrast to the fishing
[857] methods described, plays only a minor role, although the young lads in particular like to practice it. In addition, the Meau are masters at catching fish with their hands. They cautiously probe the hiding places of the fish under the stones and roots and, with lightning speed, seize the animals by their gills as they calmly remain in their hiding places. At
[165] this sport, however, many Meau have fallen victim to
[136] poisonous water-snakes.

[221] The time for fishing is after the harvest in the dry season. Then the streams have reached their lowest water level, and a narrow channel connects the deep pools where the fish seek safety. Then every fishing method of the Meau, with the exception of angling with hooks, is productive. The latter, on the other hand, is practiced only at the time of rising water, when the clear water is made turbid by downpours.

[184] Fishing baskets, dams, fences, fixed nets or drag nets,
[227] fishing spears, and /353/ fishing arrows for crossbows or bows are, like harpoons, unknown to the Meau in Thailand.

39: Bernatzik--480 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 A01 Thailand

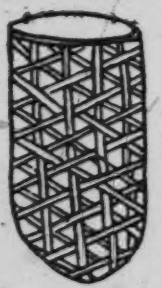
Akha A04
Miao AE5

/353 cont./

A 226 The Akha, too, do not know these fishing methods and are not even familiar with fish poison. Moreover, the Akha are not nearly as passionate about it, but they are likewise good fishermen. Like the Meau, they fish with their hands, with lines, simple hooks and small hand-nets which resemble A [227] the fish nets of the Meau. The net, however, is attached to a perforated wooden hoop (chapter, "Handicrafts," Fig. 406); the meshes of the net are like those of the carrying bags.

d) Agriculture

M 243 [433] [171] Whereas gathering, hunting, and fishing play almost only the role of expanding the food base, agriculture is the actual economic basis of all the mountain peoples of Farther India.



M 178 243 407 Fig. 266 Weir-basket of the Meau, about 1/20 nat. size.

The Meau in Thailand, strangely enough, do not arrange their rice fields in terraces, though their neighbors, the Chinese, are famous masters at it, and this agricultural method makes possible the cultivation of wet rice. Thus, on the steep slopes which, without terraces, also do not permit the use of the plow, only hoe culture remains. There are still living witnesses to the fact that in former times, and to be sure not too long ago, the situation was different in the more northerly habitation sites of the Meau M [227] [285] now settled in Thailand. For instance, I found in northern Thailand a few old Meau who were still familiar with the use of the plow. In answer to my question as to why the use of this implement had been given up, an old chief replied: "This land, and even more the country that we had to pass through to reach our present dwelling sites, is mountainous, stony, and does not permit the use of the plow. In our old homeland, too, there were such regions in which one could not use a plow. In

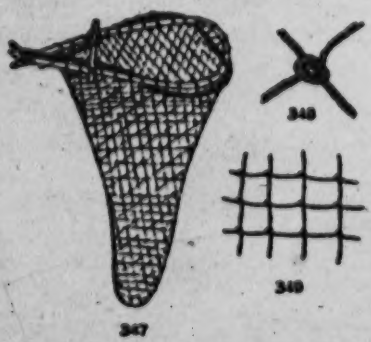
Miao AE5

/400 cont./

285 The mats of the Meau are plaited with rattan strips one to one and a half centimeters wide and always display the same plaiting pattern (Fig. 329). The type of plaiting is very tight and the edges are carefully finished, so /401/ that these mats show great durability. They are almost square and on the average 1.60X1.50 meters in size. They are used as an [513] [243] underlayer for sleeping and to spread the ears of rice on during the threshing, as well as for drying the threshed grain.

286 The Meau also produce nets, which are either knotted or [413] crocheted, but not knitted (Figs. 347, 348, and 349). The crochet needle is of wood and consists of a small hook with an attached handle about 20 centimeters long. It is called kŭń.

285 Abadie also mentions the skill of the Meau in the production of plaited work: "Every Meau is more or less a plaiter, [512] and the entire household makes carrying baskets of rattan fiber or bamboo. Every member of the family owns a piece in the size appropriate to his strength."

283 

Figs. 347-349. Handnet of the Meau for Fishing, about 1/20 nat. size. [227] [286] The knotted net is tied to a stick bent in the shape of a circle. Fig. 348, knots; Fig. 349, net meshes; 1/2 nat. size.

Furthermore the Meau make all the ropes, from the thinnest strings to thick ropes and hide ropes. To make thin strings three fibers of rattan or of the bast /Figs. 347-349 appear here/ of certain trees are twisted on the upper or lower leg (Ill. 64). Greater degrees of strength are obtained by adding three fibers each time, so that a thicker

[See Cat 116, P470- ANALYST]